

# Chapter 4 Promoting Regional Revitalization

## Section 1 Approaches to Regional Revitalization

In order to properly respond to the declining birth rate/aging population to put a brake on population declines, while correcting the excessive concentration in Tokyo Area and maintaining vitality of Japanese society in the future by securing a comfortable living environment in each region, the Basic Policy for Overcoming Population Decline and Vitalizing Local Economy in Japan 2016 was formulated in 2017 and the Overcoming Population Decline and Vitalizing Local Economies: Comprehensive Strategy was revised, in accordance with the Act for Overcoming the Population Decline and Vitalizing Local Economy in Japan passed in November 2014. Also, with the aim of deepening the regional revitalization, ideas such as using vacant stores and other idle properties and promoting regional universities were examined, and information, human and financial support to promote specific initiatives based on the regional comprehensive strategy was provided to local governments.

To help local governments achieve sustainable development goals (SDGs), the Local Government SDG Promotion Project for Regional Revitalization was established. From February to March of 2018, the Japanese government solicited proposals for initiatives to help local government units (prefectural governments and municipal governments) achieve SDGs, and will eventually select up to 30 cities and regions that submit excellent proposals as SDG Cities of the Future. Roughly 10 of the most advanced initiatives of that group will be selected for a Local Government SDG Model Project, and will receive financial support. In addition, efforts will be made to promote the diffusion of initiatives to achieve SDGs, with the goal of 30% of prefectural and municipal governments working on these initiatives by 2020.

In February 2018, the Cabinet approved and submitted to the National Diet the Bill to Partially Amend the Regional Revitalization Act. The bill includes provisions for revisions to the Tax Credit System for Regional Cores, a system for creating quality employment opportunities and regional areas to correct the overconcentration of the Japanese population in Tokyo; the establishment of a System for the Expenses of Regional Revitalization Area Management, a public-private partnership that collects expenses required for area management activities to contribute to regional revitalization from beneficiaries and distributes them to area management groups; measures for promoting the Project to Promote the Reinvigoration of Shopping Districts, a project that strives to reinvigorate shopping districts for such activities as using vacant stores; and the fulfillment of a so-called “small-core tax system,” an investment incentive tax system to promote investment in corporations that work to provide employment opportunities and life services in hilly and mountainous areas.

In order to realize regional revitalization through regulatory reform, the National Strategic Special Districts system has successfully reformed regulations that had been difficult to change due to stiff opposition in a wide range of fields, including medical care, nursery care, employment, education, agriculture, urban reconstruction and community-building. In addition, the 10 designated districts have visibly moved forward with specific projects that capitalize on these regulatory reforms. Furthermore, six fields were specified for intensive efforts in a two-year intensive reform assistance period ending at the end of FY 2017, and reform of regulations that had been difficult to change due to stiff opposition was promoted during that period.

The MLIT pushes forward the development of tourism regions, having the Destination Marketing/Management Organization (DMO) as its core, creating various regional contents and establishing an environment to receive tourists to become a world-class tourist destination under the keywords of “region” and “consumption.” The MLIT also drives efforts to create jobs by promoting the securing and development of human resources engaged in the construction, shipbuilding, transportation and other industries that underpin regional economies.

Furthermore, with the aim of reviving regional communities, we are pushing forward efforts to make regional cities compact and create transportation networks, form small stations in hilly and mountainous areas, and develop houses and towns for multi-generation residents in coordination with the comprehensive regional care system in suburban metropoli-

tan areas. We are also promoting multi-habitation in earnest and establishing an environment for making relocation easier by facilitating the distribution of existing homes in order to create new flows of people into rural areas.

The MLIT has also been driving nationwide urban renaissance, through the development of public and public-benefit facilities in a public-private partnership, as well as urban renaissance aimed at the enhancement of international competitiveness of cities by mainly private developers.

## Section 2 Promoting Measures Supporting Regional Revitalization

### 1 Efforts Directed at Augmenting Regional and Private Self-reliance and Discretion

#### (1) Supporting Local Regional Revitalization Efforts

Regional revitalization is not an effort to be taken uniformly throughout Japan; it involves individual regions capitalizing on their distinct resources and characteristics to tackle their own distinct challenges to overcome depopulation. As local governments continue to devise plans for measures, promote projects and verify effects in line with their own individual strategies, the national government has continued to play the supporting role of providing assistance on information, personnel and financial aspects.

To provide assistance on information aspects, the government provides the Regional Economy and Society Analyzing System (RESAS), which takes big data from the public and private sectors regarding regional economies and makes it visible and intuitive. The system is used to fully understand the current state and challenges of each region; analyze strengths, weaknesses and future visions; set basic targets and KPIs, and establish PDCA cycles, thereby supporting the regional revitalization efforts of local governments, private companies, residents, NPOs and others.

To provide assistance on personnel aspects, regional revitalization colleges train and secure the human resources required for regional revitalization, while the government provides support through the regional revitalization concierge, which sets up a consultation desk at each ministry and the regional revitalization personnel support system in which government, private company and other organizations' personnel are dispatched to small local governments.

To provide assistance on financial aspects, we are providing support through such efforts as a regional revitalization promotion subsidy that consistently and continuously supports multi-year, forward-thinking projects undertaken by local governments, and a regional revitalization support tax system that provides preferential treatment in the form of tax credits for corporate donations to regional revitalization efforts undertaken by local governments (a corporate version of *furusato nozei*, which is a system of remitting local taxes to regional municipalities of the remitters' choice), thereby enabling regions to make consistent efforts toward regional revitalization from medium- and long-term perspectives.

The MLIT is engaged in similar efforts as well. To promote further approaches to individualistic and charming regional planning across Japan, the MLIT awards regional activities related to favorable social overhead capital with Handmade Hometown Prizes (Minister of MLIT Prizes) since 1987. In FY2017, the MLIT hosted the "Handmade Hometown Prize Grand Prix 2017: Refined, Shining, Hometown Pride." At the event, 19 prize-winning groups (3 for grand prize division, 16 for general division) gathered to give presentations, and judges selected the Grand Prix and best presentation prize-winners in each of the grand prize and general division. Furthermore, the information was sent by newsletter as good case examples that are useful for regional development<sup>Note</sup>.

#### (2) Promoting Use of Know-how and Funds Originating from Private Sectors

In order to enhance the growth and competitiveness of local cities, MINTO provided support in the forms of investment, joint operation, and so forth in private urban redevelopment projects, such as those linked with an urban renaissance and development project undertaken by a local public entity and accredited by the Minister of MLIT. Accordingly, MINTO has established a "Community-Building Fund Support Program (Management-Style)" that sequentially promotes multiple renovation projects and the like, while collaborating with local financial institutions to launch community-building funds and perform area management.

**Note** Regional Planning Information System-Repis website: <http://www.mlit.go.jp/sogoseisaku/region/chiiki-joho/index.html>  
1,971 e-newsletter registrants as of the end of FY 2017 (as of the end of March 2018)

In its bid to realize and maintain the concept of sustainable community development with community participation through maintenance and betterment of community charms and vitalities, the MLIT supports projects related to the diffusion and promotion of know-how, etc., that is possessed by private associations with experience in the practice of community development activities and that leads to continuing sources of certain profitability in the course of such activities, so that such knowledge can be horizontally extended to other associations about to embark on similar activities, or to experimental approaches, etc., relevant to ingenious, advanced private community development activities.

In addition, consideration is in progress toward the realization of measures aimed at combatting aging expressways in conjunction with urban redevelopment, using the Tsukiji River and other sections of the Metropolitan Expressways as model cases, on the basis of the Road Act amended in FY 2014 that allows for usage of upper open spaces on roads.

Regarding the project to bury the Nihombashi section of the Metropolitan Expressway, the MLIT has cooperated with Tokyo Metropolitan Government, Chuo City, and Metropolitan Expressway to push forward with discussions toward organizing a specific plan to link the project with community-building efforts around the expressway in that area by the summer of 2018. In February 2018, the Cabinet approved and submitted to the National Diet the Bill to Partially Amend the Act on Special Measures Concerning Urban Reconstruction, which includes provisions for measures to promote the proactive use of the grade-separated road system by expanding its scope to include ordinary roads.

Moreover, public-private partnership efforts leveraging road spaces are pushed forward in order to create forums for regional activity/exchanges and maintain/improve road quality.

In FY2015, the Act to Partially Amend the Act on Special Districts for Structural Reform, which enables private-sector operators to operate toll roads managed by public corporations, was passed and enacted, and since October 2016, toll roads in Aichi Prefecture have been operated by the Aichi Road Concession Corporation, established by the Maeda Group (Representative corporation: Maeda Corporation).

## 2 General Endeavors to Build an Intensive Urban Structure

Compact cities and development of surrounding transportation networks such as by rebuilding public transportation networks should be worked on continuously with the mid- to long-term perspectives as they are effective policy means to realize specific administrative purposes such as maintaining and improving convenience of lives of residents, revitalizing regional economies by enhanced productivity in the service industry, and reducing administrative costs by improved efficiency in administrative services.

With the aim of pushing forward initiatives of municipalities toward the realization of compact cities, the Act on Special Measures concerning Urban Regeneration was amended in 2014 to create the appropriate location plan system for encouraging establishment of residential and urban functions with economic incentives. As of the end of FY 2017, 407 municipalities made specific efforts on creating appropriate location plans, of which 142 cities prepared and published the appropriate location plan. 579 local governments has tackled with local public transportation networking plans and 410 of them has published the plans.

In addition, we are working to improve support measures in line with actual needs, formulate and horizontally develop model cities, and make the outcomes of efforts visible through the Compact City Formation Support Team (secretariat:

Figure II-4-2-1

Kyoto Minamiza Kabuki Theater (Shijo, Kyoto City, Kyoto Prefecture), an Example of Joint Implementation and Other Forms of Support for Excellent Private Urban Redevelopment Projects



Source) MLIT



MLIT), which comprises relevant ministries and agencies, so that these initiatives of municipalities will be promoted as comprehensive efforts in coordination with various relevant measures concerning healthcare/welfare, housing, realignment of public facilities and the optimum use of government owned facilities.

In FY 2017, we worked to improve important support measures based on the actual issues and needs of municipalities, and provided them with an overall collection of support measures in list form. In addition, we selected 10 model cities that are implementing initiatives that clearly indicate target values and their ideal state as cities and are expected to exhibit the effects of a Compact Plus Network, and also released the second version of the “Collection of Cases of Proceeding and Efforts,” a collection of positive cases from individual projects. Furthermore, regarding smart planning, which is a method of planning in which optimal facility locations and other factors are examined from users’ viewpoints, we conducted observations in multiple cities to further improve advanced systems, and made efforts to provide a wider array of quantifiable measures and evaluation indices.

In addition, the Cabinet approved and submitted to the National Diet the Bill to Partially Amend the Act on Special Measures Concerning Urban Reconstruction. The bill includes provisions for appropriate measures to undertake to counter the “spongification” of Japanese cities, a phenomenon in which vacant land, houses and other properties occur with temporal and spatial randomness, hollowing out the urban structure and obstructing the formation of Compact Plus Networks.

### 3 Urban Planning and Infrastructures Development Taking Advantage of Regional Characteristics

#### (1) Emergency Development of Urban Planning Roads Instrumental in Encouraging Private Investment

The development of urban planning roads is instrumental in facilitating urban reconstruction because it encourages the reconstruction, etc., of roadside buildings. For those routes under construction whose completion is bottlenecked because of small plots of land yet to be purchased, the local governments (project-implementing entities) have announced their pledges to complete the construction within a certain period of time (completion time declaration routes; as of April 2017, 130 routes were declared by 73 project-implementing entities) to speed up the development of the project benefits.

#### (2) Developing Transport Nodes

Transport nodes, such as railway stations and bus terminals, are very convenient and have great potential as the core of urban reconstruction, because they attract numerous people to use the various kinds of transport facilities that converge upon them.

The MLIT leveraged the implementation of transport node improvement projects, urban and regional transport strategy promotion projects, integrated railway station improvement projects, and other projects at the transport nodes, such as the Shinjuku St. South Exit District, and in the surrounding areas, in order to improve the ease with which passengers transition from one means of transportation to another, to consolidate the urban areas disrupted by railways, to improve station functions, and to streamline urban traffic and augment the functions of these transport nodes.

The MLIT also encouraged the upgrading the station facilities for the general goals of safe and comfortable regional living through building child-support and medical facilities on the premises of existing railway stations. This idea was developed from the viewpoint of regional concentration, which brings medicine, work, and living into closer vicinity.

Figure II-4-2-2

Example of a Transport Node Improvement Project (Shinjuku Station South Exit)



(Source) MLIT

### (3) Strengthening Connections between Modes of Transportation (Modal Connections)

Regarding concentrated transportation terminals, including the Shinjuku Expressway Bus Terminal, the MLIT developed strategic implementation via road projects while strengthening public-private partnerships, and is promoting the strengthening of bus service and other modal connections to accelerate the flow of people, goods and accelerate regional revitalization by creating a place in which people can choose a transportation mode from a wide variety of options, all of which are easy to use.

As for the user environment for buses in Japan, from the users' point of view, bus services are of much lower quality than railway and airway services in Japan and bus services in foreign countries. As user-oriented road measures that boost stock effects are promoted in the future, it is important that the road measures also include efforts to accelerate the improvement of the convenience of public transportation, including buses, while taking into account the state of the network between expressways, railways, Shinkansen and other modes of transportation in regional areas.

Under these circumstances, as an effort focused on buses, we will implement the Basuta (Bus Terminal) Project to improve the convenience of bus hubs while making full use of ITS and PPP, thereby strengthening modal connections, realizing the revitalization of regions, and improving productivity in the strengthening of disaster responses.

In April 2016, Basuta Shinjuku, the largest bus terminal in Japan, opened at the South Exit of Shinjuku Station. Basuta Shinjuku was developed through a public-private partnership initiative in which infrastructure was developed under a road project (for National Route 20), while the private bus terminal operates the facility. The bus terminal is directly connected to railways, and the 19 expressway bus stops formerly located near the West Exit of Shinjuku Station are now concentrated in one place. We solicited opinions from users after opening the facility, and continued to improve its convenience, adding full-scale convenience stores, women's washrooms, benches and other facilities. We also promoted the strengthening of traffic countermeasures on National Highway Route 20 through such efforts as rerouting expressway bus traffic and extending right turn lanes at intersections.

The MLIT will continue to improve convenience by effectively using space within facilities and providing operational information to users through the full-scale introduction of an expressway bus operations support system, and to promote traffic countermeasures through countermeasures for cargo-handling vehicles on National Highway Route 20, transportation flow countermeasures through cooperation with transportation managers and the like.

In addition, in FY 2017, for Shinagawa Station and in the Kobe-Sannomiya area, we promoted the examination of concentrated transportation terminal improvement projects that make use of the grade-separated road system.

We are also promoting the effective use of transfers between expressway buses at expressway service areas and parking areas, junction transportation, and expressway bus stops, as well as the improvement of environments for using local buses.

As for the new modes of transportation of car-sharing and bicycle-sharing, we are promoting efforts that strengthen connections with other modes of public transportation while making effective use of roadway spaces.

We built Japan's first on-road car-sharing station adjacent to the Otemachi subway station complex in Chiyoda City, Tokyo, and are implementing a pilot program to verify the possibilities of encouraging the use of public transportation. In addition, in March 2018, we added a car-sharing station near Shimbashi Station, which is in a different type of location. We are also implementing a separate pilot program to verify the effects of locating a bicycle-sharing port, which would be the first in the metropolis, on the national route near this car-sharing station. We will take into account the results of these pilot programs while continuing discussions toward improving convenience for road users through the effective use of roadway spaces.

### (4) Wide-area Development of Infrastructures to Induce Firm Location

Competition, collaboration, and regional buoyancy in East Asia should benefit greatly by inviting and accumulating internationally competitive growing industries in the individual regions. Motivated by this recognition, measures have been promoted to support expanding regional employment and more buoyant economy by concentrating investment on the development of those infrastructures that are truly needed to carry out unique regional approaches, such as developing airports, ports and harbors, railroads and wide-area expressway networks.

**(i) Airport development**

Aviation network connecting distant cities at home and abroad are greatly instrumental in revitalizing regional communities, boosting the tourism industry and corporate economic activities. It is expected that the aviation sector will play a key role to boost Japanese economy taking advantage of global economic growth, in particular booming economy in Asia. In an effort to enhance Japan's international competitiveness and regional competitiveness in the hinterlands of the airports, MLIT has been making efforts to enhance airport capacities and relocate or change the internal layout of airport terminal area in order to improve user-friendliness.

**(ii) Port and harbor development**

In Japan, which is surrounded by the sea, the majority of international trades are conducted by marine transportation, and domestic marine transportation serves important roles in logistics and interactions between regions. Ports and harbors are the gateway for international trades and support Japanese industries as places of corporate activities. In order to enhance international competitiveness of Japanese industries by improving logistics efficiency and to maintain and create employment and income, international logistics terminals are being developed at ports and harbors that underpin regional key industries.

**(iii) Railway development**

The nationwide network of trunk railways is the lifeblood of passenger and freight transport, accelerating interaction between blocks and between regions, encouraging industrial location, and activating regional economies to energize regional living. Rail freight transport, in particular, plays a dominant role in moving industrial commodities that support regional economies.

**(iv) Road development**

The MLIT is strengthening Japan's international competitiveness by accelerating and facilitating logistics, and from the perspective of regional revitalization, is forming a new network of trunk highways, such as high-standard arterial highways.

**(5) Accelerating the Development of Transport Infrastructures**

Regarding the method for determining whether considerations for awarding sectional surface rights, etc., related to projects authorized to use the deep underground pursuant to the Act on Special Measures Concerning Public Use of Deep Underground (Deep Underground Act) are to be treated as transferred income or not, the FY2015 tax reform has taken measures to have such considerations set based on the vertical range of the sectional surface rights, etc., in which the profit from use is limited, instead of one-fourth of the land price. This measure taxes, as transfer income, a certain amount of the considerations for awarding sectional surface rights, etc., relevant to the projects that are implemented as an integral part of a project accredited under the Deep Underground Act. Granting a special credit of 50 million yen for exchanges on expropriation, etc., promotes the earlier appearance of project effects.

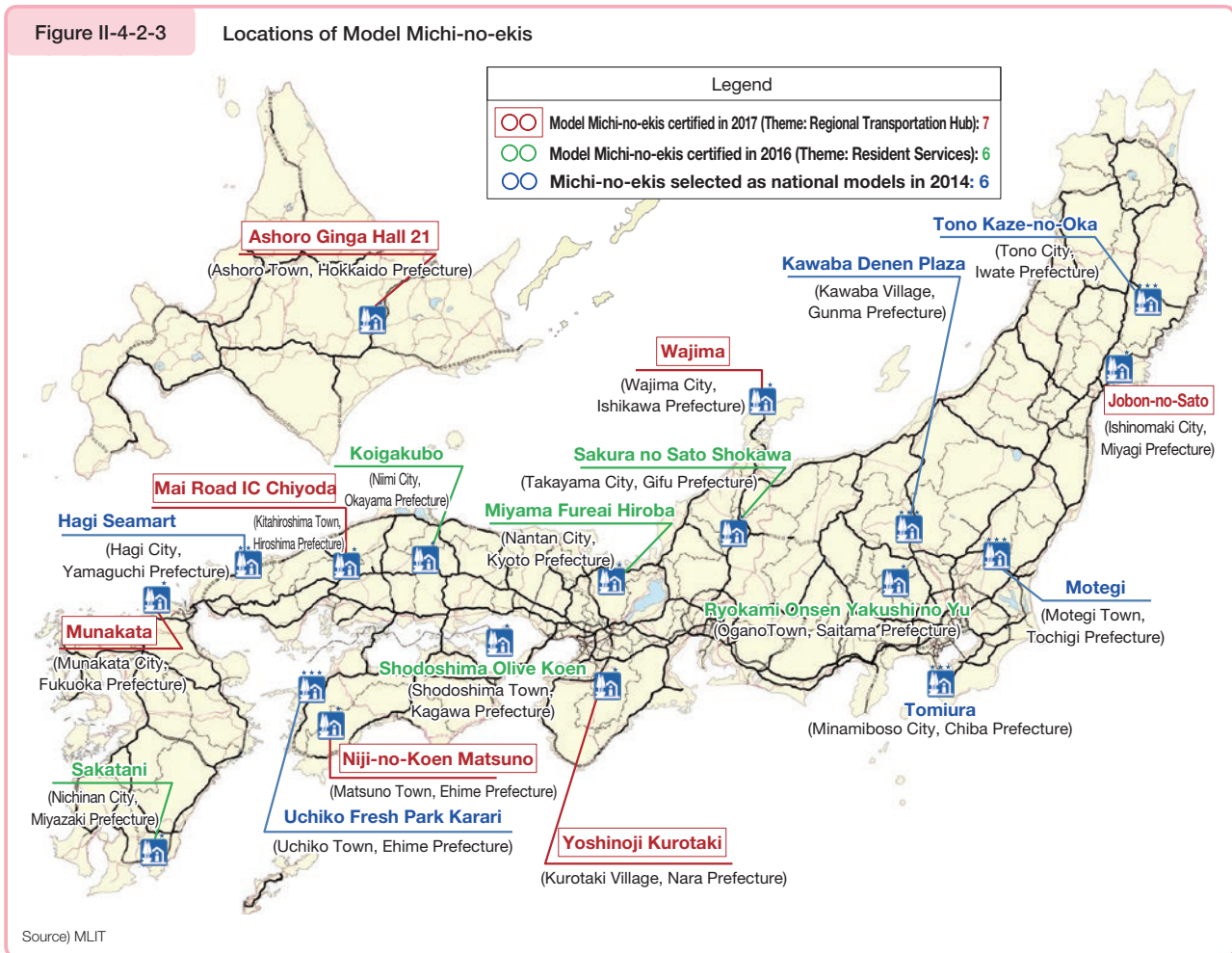
**(6) Promoting Community-conscious Projects and Programs****(i) Michi-no-eki (Roadside Station)**

Located roadside, a Michi-no-eki is a facility that combines a mix of roadside amenities, including parking spaces and restrooms, sources of information, including highway and regional information, and a forum of regional partnerships, which encourages interaction between a region and users of the roads in that region and between regions. As of November 2017, there were 1,134 registered Michi-no-ekis.

Efforts have progressed in recent years to set up Michi-no-ekis as hubs of regional revitalization nationwide, thereby creating regional employment, reactivating economies, and helping improve resident services. As a framework to provide focused support to these efforts in coordination with relevant organizations, the priority Michi-no-eki system was created in FY 2014. In addition to six national model Michi-no-ekis and 35 priority Michi-no-ekis selected for the establishment of the system, 38 priority Michi-no-ekis were newly selected in FY 2015. Furthermore, in FY 2016, we began an initiative in which we establish specific themes, and certify as models Michi-no-ekis that exhibit exemplary performance according



to those themes. In FY 2016, we certified six Michi-no-ekis under the theme of “resident services,” and in FY 2017, we certified seven Michi-no-ekis under the theme of “regional transportation hub.”



#### (ii) Creation of hubs through the use of expressway rest areas

Expressway rest areas were typically thought of as only available to users of expressways, but the development of “welcome gates,” “highway oases,” and the like in recent years has opened the facilities to regions along the expressways to promote regional revitalization, and to encourage those efforts, we are collaborating with relevant organizations to provide support in line with the progress of those efforts.

Toward that end, in March 2017, we installed a welcome gate at the Takahashi Service Area on the Okayama Expressway to encourage people in the surrounding areas to use it.

#### (iii) Improvement of road management through public-private partnerships

Past efforts to work together with regions in the course of road management include cooperation with private groups and others through the Volunteer Support Program (VSP) and the like. In April 2016, the Road Act was amended and a road cooperation organization system was created in an effort to further improve road management through cooperation with private groups and others who resolve common road-related problems, take targeted action to address the needs of road users, and voluntarily implement other activities. As of the end of FY2017, we had designated 30 groups for national highways under government control.

Road cooperation organizations implement activities in roadway spaces to improve the appeal of roads, and the benefits reaped from those activities make it possible to improve road management activities. In addition, road cooperation organizations are undertaking measures to streamline and facilitate administrative procedures regarding the construction and

maintenance of roads and their exclusive use of roads.

(iv) Support system for river-town planning

In order to revitalize rivers that show various shapes from the mouth to the source and communities connected to them, we are promoting the formation of favorable spaces where rivers and towns integrate by formulating plans for river-town planning that utilizes rivers with practical use of resources; such as landscape, history, culture and foundation for tourism; and inventive wisdom of the district, under coordination among municipalities, private businesses, local residents, and river administrators. By FY2017, 191 locations had been registered in the support system for river-town planning.

(v) Managing rivers with resident participation to suit regional characteristics

Those individuals who possess an expert knowledge of river environments and who are zealous for the good river development are appointed as river environment preservation monitors to help create and preserve river environments and carry out meticulous activities aimed at ensuring and promoting orderly river usage. Love river monitors are also at work in order to gather information about river management, such as illegal garbage dumping in to river or defects in river facilities, to report that information to river administrators and to promote the philosophy of river protection.

Furthermore, the MLIT designates private organizations, etc., that pursue voluntary activities relevant to the maintenance of rivers, the preservation of river environments, or other types of river management as river cooperation organizations, and legally accredits them as organizations working in conjunction with river administrators, with a view to promoting organized voluntary activities and driving diverse modes of river management tailored to specific regional conditions.

(vi) Supporting efforts to take advantage of the regional features of the seaside

With the aim of stimulating the use of the seaside and enhancing its charm as a tourist resource, we support seaside environment development projects in which seaside preservation facilities are developed according to active seaside usage plans.

The MLIT designates those corporations and associations that are accredited to be capable of voluntarily conducting various activities, such as cleaning and planting seashores for preservation, protecting rare species of animals and plants along the seaside, getting prepared for natural disasters and hosting sessions of environmental education, as seaside cooperation organizations to reinforce the ties of collaboration with localities and thus to enhance coastal management to suit regional characteristics. Through FY 2017, the MLIT has designated 14 organizations.

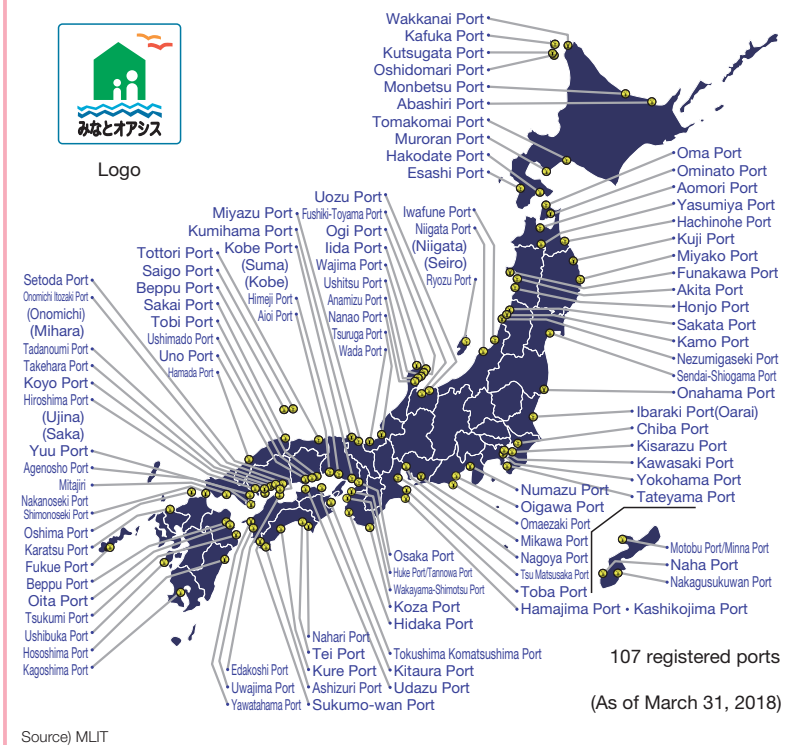
(vii) Regional promotion built around ports

Those facilities at which continual approaches to regional development are carried on have been accredited as Minato (Port) Oases by Ports and Harbors Bureau Director-Generals to promote community development around the core of ports to help revitalize localities by promoting exchanges of local residents and tourism (107 ports as of the end of March 2018).

Minato Oases help generate excitement in communities through various activities such as the “All Japan Sea-kyu Gourmet Competition” hosted by the National Council on Minato Oases. These facilities

Figure II-4-2-4

National Map of Minato Oases





are also expected to serve new needs, such as accepting the rapidly increasing number of inbound tourists who arrive by cruise ship in recent years, and providing support during and after disasters.

In addition, to respond to diversifying needs of ports and harbors, such as providing Japanese-style hospitality when cruise ships dock at Japanese ports and harbors, and for purposes such as promoting management of ports and harbors through public-private partnerships, the Ports and Harbors Cooperation Association system through which port and harbor administrators designate appropriate private groups and the like is used to make further efforts to revitalize communities centered around ports.

## Column

### Minato Oases Registrations Break the Century Mark!

Minato Oases are port-centered areas that contribute to community-building and help generate excitement in communities by serving as places for exchange between local residents and tourists as well as places to rest, obtain information and more. Minato Oases have spread throughout Japan since their establishment in November 2003 by the Chugoku and Shikoku Regional Development Bureaus. In addition, in February 2017, a transition was made to a new, nationwide system in which Port and Harbor Bureau Director-Generals accredit Minato Oases in an integrated manner. This transition was made to further promote regional development through efforts to promote the registration and enhance the recognition of Minato Oases, as well as to serve new needs, such as accepting the increasing number of inbound tourists who arrive by cruise ship in recent years, and serving as a support base during and after disasters. The transition resulted in 14 new registrations in FY 2017, which pushed the nationwide number of Minato Oases into triple digits. More registrations are expected in the future, and as more Minato Oases appear far and wide throughout Japan, we can expect them to help generate excitement in communities through events such as the “Minato Oasis All Japan Sea-kyu Gourmet Competition.”

Trends in the Number of Registered Minato Oases



Source) MLIT



A facility that is part of a Minato Oasis (Minato Oasis Shimonoseki)



A regional development event held at a Minato Oasis (Minato Oasis Sakaiminato)

#### (viii) Building centers of marine leisure

The MLIT also promotes the establishment of Umi-no-ekis to leverage existing port facilities, marinas, fish arenas (fishing + arena) and the like. As of the end of March 2018, 161 Umi-no-ekis have been registered. The MLIT also provides support for diverse, regionally distinctive efforts such as cruising on rental boats, the sale of marine products, hands-on experiences with fishing, events and the like so that visitors can enjoy Umi-no-ekis as places where the sea meets the land. In addition, the MLIT works together with relevant organizations to expand the appeal and enhance the recognition

of Umi-no-ekis, and to make full use of them as bases for disaster risk reduction and rescue.

#### (7) Promoting the Active Maintenance of Cadastral Maps

Cadastral surveys are conducted by municipal authorities to reveal the boundaries and the areas of individual lots of land, and contribute to the promotion of prevention measures to be taken in advance of major disasters, faster restoration and reconstruction after disasters, smoother development of infrastructure and the promotion of urban development by private sectors. The MLIT, to accelerate cadastral surveys, not only provides financial support to cadastral surveys, but also develops public-private boundary information in urban areas and preserves boundary information in mountainous areas under direct state control, and promotes the utilization of non-cadastral survey results.

In addition, the MLIT also promotes the streamlining of cadastral surveys through efforts such as considering efficient survey methods using satellite images and other surveying technique, and creating operation guidelines for these methods.

#### (8) Deep underground utilization

Regarding deep underground utilization, a deep underground utilization council exchanges information on deep underground space, in addition to technical discussions facilitation of examination.

## 4 Self-Reliance and Revitalization of Wide-Area Blocks, and Formation of National Land

### (1) National Land and Regional Development for Creation of Convection Promoting National Land

To achieve regional revitalization and sustainable growth, it is important to deploy measures in an integrated manner while drawing out regional wisdom and devices. Therefore, with the aim of forming convection promoting land that encourages innovations by dynamically inducing convection across Japan under the National Spatial Strategies and Regional Plans, measures are being taken according to the characteristics of regions while working to form multi-layered national land and regional structures. The MLIT also works on strategies for regional revitalization through public-private partnerships and government support in developing foundations that underpin private sector activity and measures to drive forward autonomous and sustainable regional development with cooperation among various entities.

#### (i) Promotion of infrastructure development for revitalization of wide-area regions

To form self-reliant wide-area blocks, in FY 2017, 33 prefectural governments established 32 common goals to work on together in groups of two to four and each government created a total of 72 wide-area regional revitalization infrastructures development plans to revitalize the regions through buoyant human and material traffic. The MLIT granted subsidies to implement structural and non-structural projects based on these plans.

#### (ii) Promoting the development of infrastructures for regional revitalization with partnership between the public and private sectors

In order to implement smooth and speedy transition from the planning stage to the implementation stage, at the time of private sector decision-making without missing opportunities for infrastructure development projects that have been worked out in a partnership between the public and private sectors to contribute to wide-area regional strategies, subsidies were provided to local governments in FY2017 for 29 feasibility studies including outline designs and implementation of PPP/PFI.

#### (iii) Promoting regional planning with diverse entities interworking

In its bid to further self-supporting, sustainable community development through the interworking of local diverse entities, the MLIT promotes efforts to build a support system with various entities interworking with one another to craft project-type community development activities (regional businesses).

#### (iv) Formation of vibrant economic and living zones through allied core metropolitan areas

In metropolitan areas that have a certain size of population and economy, the formation of allied core metropolitan areas that aim to lead economic growth, consolidate and strengthen high-level city functions and enhance services related to

people's daily lives is promoted.

Originally metropolitan areas in scope were mainly regional ordinance-designated cities and core cities (population of 200,000 or more). However, the Overcoming Population Decline and Vitalizing Local Economies: Comprehensive Strategy (revised in 2015) added metropolitan areas centering on adjacent two neighboring cities with population of more than 100,000 each to the scope under certain conditions. As of the end of March 2018, the scope included 27 areas.

## (2) Promotion, etc. of regional center formation

### (i) Developing centers of self-reliant growth of diverse wide-area blocks

In core cities<sup>Note</sup> based on the Multi-Polar Patterns National Land Formation Promotion Act, business facilities are being relocated and various other functions are being concentrated as we continue to promote development. In addition, the MLIT has driven the construction of Tsukuba Science City to pursue urban revitalization by taking advantage of an accumulation of science and technology Based on the Tsukuba Science City Construction Act. Furthermore, as the pace of urban development accelerates along the Tsukuba Express railroad line, environmentally friendly cities are being built along the Tsukuba Express railroad line by leveraging the characteristics of Tsukuba Science City. In addition, to form a new hub for the deployment of cultural, academic and research activity based on the Kansai Science City Construction Act, the construction of Kansai Science City is under way with a partnership among affiliated ministries, local governments, economic circles and so on according the Basic Policy on the Construction of Kansai Science City.

### (ii) Promoting Small Station development within a village area

In some hilly and mountainous areas and other regions with declining and aging population, it is increasingly difficult to maintain life service functions, including shopping and healthcare, and community functions. Therefore, in regions that have multiple villages, including elementary school districts, we are promoting the formation of small stations in which required functions and bases of regional activities are concentrated within walking distance, and transportation networks with nearby villages are secured.

Specifically, we support the realignment and consolidation of life service functions leveraging unused facilities, and are working on penetration and boosting awareness in coordination with relevant ministries.

### (iii) Reviews of the relocation of the Diet and other organizations

The MLIT aids the Diet in its reviews of the relocation of the Diet and other organizations based on the Act for Relocation of the Diet and Other Organizations by conducting surveys on the relocation of the Diet, disseminating information to the nation and so on.

## (3) Actions on Land for Which Owners and Their Whereabouts Are Difficult to Find

Changes in the Japanese socioeconomic landscape are causing an increase in land for which owners and their whereabouts are difficult to find. The existence of this land inhibits the implementation of projects in situations such as improving public works. To facilitate the use of land for which owners and their whereabouts are difficult to find, the Bill on Special Measures Concerning the Facilitation of the Use of Land for which Owners and their Whereabouts are Difficult to Find was submitted to the National Diet in March 2018.

**Note** Core cities are cities other than the special wards of Tokyo that serve as the cores of considerable widespread areas around them (There are 14 core cities.).

## 5 Promoting Regional Partnerships and Interaction

### (1) Forming a Trunk-line Network to Support Regions

To achieve safe, comfortable travel to the central part of an area that has urban functions, such as medical care and education, the MLIT supports the elimination of bottlenecks by widening existing roads and developing road networks. Furthermore, in order to promote the integration of merged municipalities, the development of roads that connect the central area of a municipality to each of its centers, such as public facilities, bridges, and so on, is being promoted by implementing municipal merger support road development projects in collaboration with the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications.

### (2) Promoting Human Interaction between Cities and Rural Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries Communities

The MLIT forms axes of human wide-area interaction and partnership through the development of trunk road networks, supplies housing and housing land to help realize country life, develops ports and harbors to serve as centers of human interaction, and more. It also promotes the creation of new types of tourism, such as green tourism, and the activities of “All Right! Nippon Conference” and so on in collaboration with the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries and other ministries concerned, to promote human interaction between rural agriculture, forestry and fisheries communities.

### (3) Promoting Regional Settlement, etc.

In order to support information dissemination by municipalities that work on expanded interactions and relocation to rural areas through hands-on exchange programs for young people in rural areas, such information is put together in the MLIT website. Information about dual habitation is also being disseminated<sup>Note</sup>.

The MLIT also supports the utilization of vacant houses and buildings by local governments through the appropriation of General Social Infrastructures Development Subsidies to address a wide range of regional issues.

### (4) Introduction of Local Design License Plate

To promote regions and tourism and to foment a sense of unity in regions, and based on proposals from municipal governments, we have decided to allow 41 areas nationwide to issue license plates with designs that feature regional characteristics, starting around October 2018.

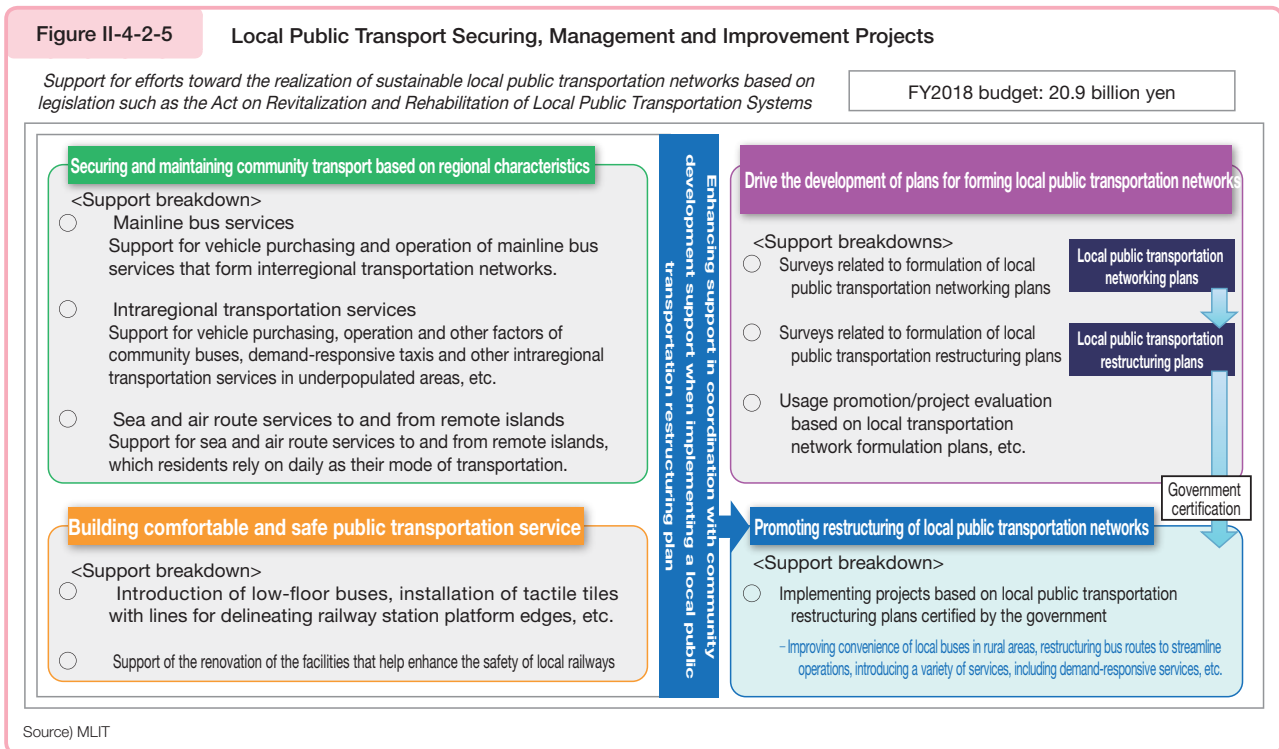
## 6 Securing Means of Regional Transport

### (1) Securing, Maintaining and Improving Means of Regional Transport

Maintaining day-to-day means of regional transport is of vital importance to the revitalization of regional communities. Out of this recognition, the MLIT supports efforts directed at forming comfortable and safe public transport, as by securing and maintaining community transport, such as regional bus routes and sea and air routes to remote islands, in collaboration with diverse stakeholders, developing facilities that help add to the safety of local railways, and implementing barrier-free measures. In FY 2017, we continued to facilitate the realization of efficient and sustainable local public transportation through such efforts as supporting the realignment of local public transportation, leveraging the framework of the Act on Revitalization and Rehabilitation of Local Public Transportation Systems.

**Note** MLIT Regional Development website: [http://www.mlit.go.jp/kokudoseisaku/chisei/kokudoseisaku\\_chisei\\_mn\\_000016.html](http://www.mlit.go.jp/kokudoseisaku/chisei/kokudoseisaku_chisei_mn_000016.html)





## (2) Activating Regional Railroads and Supporting Safety Assurance, etc.

While regional railroads not only support the livelihood of the local residents living along the railroads as a means of their daily transport but also play an important role in providing them with public transport of critical importance in supporting regional interaction between tourist resorts. However, their management is in an extremely tough situation. For this reason, the MLIT supports not only the maintenance of safety facilities by implementing local public transport securing, management and improvement projects or offering tax incentives, but also the construction, etc., of new stations on local routes that have high potential needs for railway use by implementing projects designed to activate trunk railways, etc.

## (3) Subsidizing Local Bus Routes

To address the pressing issue of securing and maintaining service buses and other regional transport services that are vital to local residents (such as interregional bus transport networks<sup>Note</sup> or bus, demand-responsive and other forms of regional transport closely related to trunk transport networks), the MLIT is providing support for the operation of regional transport services, updating of buses and other needs to help secure and maintain optimal networks of regional transport tailored to specific regional characteristics and conditions. In addition, the MLIT is also working closely with key people in local areas to improve productivity with full attention paid to regional characteristics in order to secure and maintain these regional transport networks amidst projections of further depopulation.

## (4) Maintaining and Revitalizing Regional Air Routes

Regional air routes face many challenges. Regional airlines must deal with vulnerable business infrastructure, high cost structures due to operating small numbers of aircraft, canceled flights due to problems with aircraft and other factors, and a limited ability to expand due to their collaboration with certain major airlines. Major airlines must deal with mismatches between aircraft and demand, such as when they use large craft that seat over 100 people, and limits to internal support as a result of intensifying competition on high-demand routes.

**Note** Wide-area, integral bus routes that satisfy standards set out by the Japanese government (routes that connect multiple municipalities with service at least three times per day, etc.) and are deemed by the Council as requiring maintenance and securement

Furthermore, there is concern over a variety of issues that could appear in the future, including updating old, small aircraft once they are no longer being manufactured, the increased supply of seats inevitably due to those updates, and the difficulty of securing pilots and other human resources.

In light of these issues, we must seek out some way for regional airlines to engage in better initiatives to make regional air routes sustainable. Therefore, in June 2017, the MLIT published an interim summary of the findings of the Committee on Sustainable Regional Air Transport, which had been meeting since June 2016, and is using these findings to continue to examine ways to realize sustainable regional air transport.

#### (5) Supporting Transport to and from Remote Islands

Residents of remote islands rely daily on sea routes to remote islands as their mode of transportation. In FY 2016, passenger transport demand for the nation's 296 sea routes fell to 43 million (an 11% decrease over the preceding decade), and most of these routes face extremely severe business conditions because they serve areas that are dealing with more pronounced depopulation and aging than mainland Japan. Therefore, projects to secure, maintain and improve regional public transportation are implemented to subsidize running costs, fare discounts for residents of remote islands, and the construction of better ships for operational efficiency on sea routes that are projected to run a deficit or are the only option in their areas (121 sea routes eligible for subsidies as of the end of March 2018).

Furthermore, the operation of bus transportation with land and sea connection that enables the elderly and those who have walking problems to use a ferry while riding on a bus started from April 2015, and 18 business operators are providing the service as of the end of FY 2017.

Air routes to remote islands are an integral mode of transportation that supports life on the islands, namely through securing medical care for the regions. Therefore, to ensure consistent air transportation to remote islands, air carriers extending their air routes to remote islands are granted comprehensive support (budget: airframe purchase grants, operational cost grants, tax and public dues: landing fee alleviation, aviation fuel tax alleviation and so on).

In FY2017, 56 remote island air routes were in service, and the national treasury subsidizes 17 routes of them.

## Section 3 Promoting the Private Urban Development

### 1 Promoting Urban Development by Private Sectors

#### (1) Promoting Urban Development by Private Sectors Based on the Specific Urban Renaissance Emergency Development Area Program

While rapidly growing Asian nations have resulted in a proportionate decline in Japan's international competitiveness, it has become an essential task to provide a powerful boost to the development of the urban areas in the nation's major cities, a source of impetus to the national growth, in a partnership between the public and private sectors to turn them into attractive urban centers that lure businesses, human resources and more from overseas. In order to achieve this, the system of Specific Urban Renaissance Emergency Development Areas to enhance urban international competitiveness of the designated areas was established. And 13 areas nationwide are now designated as such (as of March 2018). In 11 of them (as of the end of March 2018), development plans were formulated by councils formed in a partnership between the public and private sector. The International Competition Base City Development Project has also been launched to provide prioritized, concentrated support to the development of urban center infrastructures in accordance with development plans.

In order to support the formation of international business and living environments, we are providing comprehensive support for the improvement of urban functions that contribute to improving these environments, both non-structural and structural measures regarding city sales, and the development of foreign language-capable medical facilities and other facilities that improve international competition through the Project Supporting the Improvement of International Competition and City Sales.

As of the end of March 2018, a total of 53 Urban Renaissance Emergency Development Areas were registered in government-ordinance-designated cities and prefectural capitals, including Tokyo and Osaka, hosting a variety of urban develop-

ment projects by private sectors in steady progress. Mezzanine support services<sup>Note</sup> supporting the procurement of middle-risk funds are carried out by MINTO.

In addition, the Bill to Partially Amend the Act on Special Measures Concerning Urban Reconstruction submitted to the National Diet in February 2018 includes provisions for measures to create a program for arranging parking facilities for urban reconstruction, add entities for proposing finalized urban plans, and more.

## (2) Status of Application of the Measures to Support Urban Reconstruction Projects

### (i) Zoning for Special Districts for Urban Renaissance

A Special District for Urban Renaissance is a new concept of an urban district, with greater latitude for zoning (exempt from existing zoning restrictions). A total of 87 Special Districts for Urban Renaissance were zoned as of the end of March 2018, 62 of which had been proposed by private entrepreneurs, etc.

### (ii) Accreditation of private urban reconstruction project plans

Private urban reconstruction project plans accredited by the Minister of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism (113 plans as of the end of March 2018) are financially supported by the Organization for Promoting Urban Development or by tax incentives.

## (3) Promoting the Formation of Larger Blocks

Since many of the central areas of Japan's major cities have been organized into blocks through the land readjustment projects for war reconstruction, etc., the scales of these blocks, with the structure of the local streets, are not fully responsive to the prevailing needs for land use, transport infrastructure and disaster prevention functions. To enhance the international competitiveness of large cities, revitalize regional cities, and seek advanced and effective land use to fill present-day needs, the MLIT promotes the aggregation of land that has been segmented into multiple blocks, the consolidated usage of sites, and the restructuring of public facilities.

## 2 Approaching National Strategic Special Districts

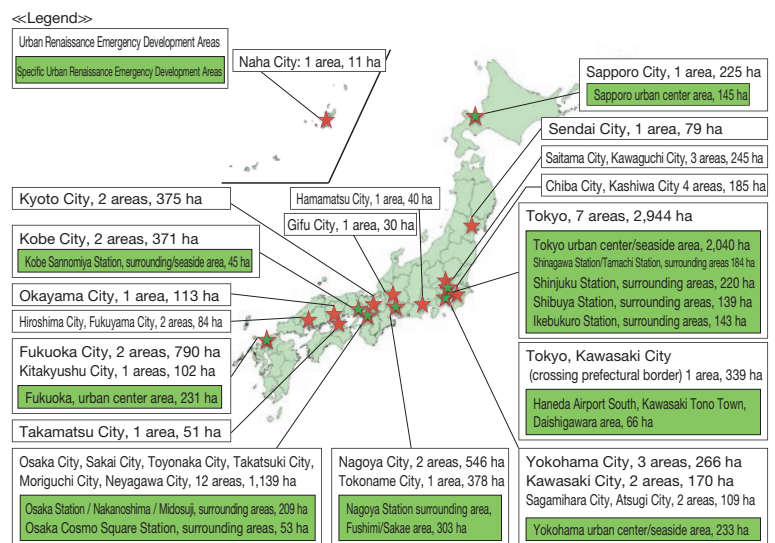
In addition to the special exemptions from the Building Standards Act, the Road Act, the City Planning Act and the like introduced as regulatory reforms in the Act on National Strategic Special Zones passed in December 2013, the amendment to the Act on National Strategic Special Zones passed in July 2015 included special exemptions concerning the establishment of nursery schools in city parks to address the increase in the number of children on waiting lists for admission to nursery schools in recent years, and an amendment to the Urban Park Act in 2017 nationalized the exemptions. The MLIT intends to promote specific projects and proceed with visible progress on the reform of regulations that have been difficult to change due to stiff opposition.

### Note

A mezzanine support service is defined as among all services that involve the development of public facilities with environmentally friendly architectural structures and sites, those that are accredited by the Minister of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism and that are entitled to the procurement of a middle-risk fund (such as a loan granted with an option to leave principal and interest subordinated) by MINTO.

Figure II-4-3-1

Status of Designation of Specific Urban Renaissance Emergency Development Areas and Urban Renaissance Emergency Development Areas (as of the End of March 2018)



Source) Cabinet Secretariat and MLIT

## Section 4 Promoting Localized Promotion Measures

### 1 Measures Directed at Heavy-snowfall Areas

The MLIT promotes the availability of transportation, the development of facilities related to living environments and conservation of national land, and the availability of people responsible for snow disposal and other measures for heavy-snowfall areas based on the Act on Special Measures concerning Countermeasures for Heavy-snowfall Areas in an effort to contribute to the economic development and improvement of residents' lives in regions where the inevitable, annual accumulation of snow inhibits improvement of residents' standards of living and industrial development. Note that 532 municipalities have been designated as heavy-snowfall areas (201 of which have been designated as special heavy-snowfall areas), and that these municipalities account for the vast area of 51% of Japan's land area (the special heavy-snowfall areas account for 20%).

### 2 Promoting Remote Islands Development

The MLIT is supporting remote islands development pursuant to the remote islands development plans formulated by the prefectures in accordance with the Remote Islands Development Act not only by appropriating lump-sum budgets for the implementation of public works projects, but also extending Remote Islands Rejuvenation Grants, to encourage settlement in remote islands, as by fostering industries and increasing employment, accelerating the scope of exchanges, as by promoting tourism, improve and consolidate safe and secure settlement conditions and so on.

In FY 2017, the MLIT published the Plan to Revitalize Remote Islands through Tourism Involving Overnight Stays and Exchange, a policy that calls for making full use of attractive island resources to create an economic ripple effect that permeates throughout the islands.

### 3 Promoting and Developing the Amami Islands and Ogasawara Islands

In addition to implementing the development of social infrastructures through promotion and development projects, etc., based on the Act on Special Measures for Promotion and Development of the Amami Islands and Act on Special Measures for Promotion and Development of the Ogasawara Islands, the MLIT leverages grants, etc., to assist with regional efforts directed at boosting employment and encouraging settlement by promoting tourism, agricultural and other industries suited to regional characteristics in pursuit of more self-supporting, more sustainable growth.

### 4 Promoting Peninsulas

To support peninsula promotion measures through peninsula promotion plans developed by prefectural governments based on the Peninsular Areas Development Act, the MLIT implements projects to encourage wide-area cooperation on peninsular development in peninsula promotion measure implementation areas (as of April 2017, 23 areas (194 municipalities in 22 prefectures)), assists efforts to contribute to the facilitation of exchanges that leverage resources and characteristics of peninsular areas, promoting industry and regional settlement, and promoting industry and developing roads that encircle peninsulas.

## Section 5 Promoting Comprehensive Development of Hokkaido

### 1 Promoting Comprehensive Development of Hokkaido

#### (1) Promotion of the Hokkaido Comprehensive Development Plan

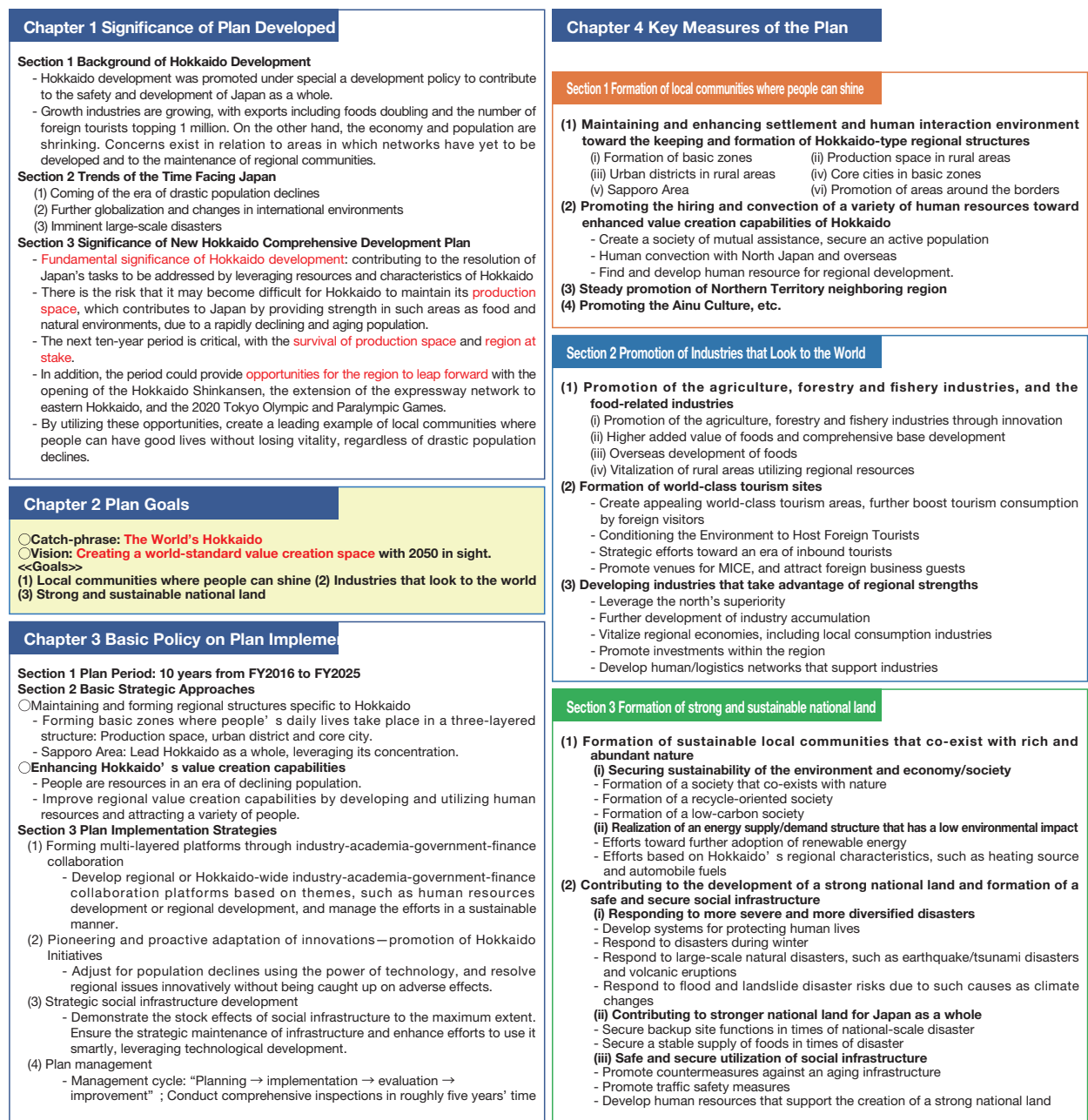
Japan has pursued an active policy of developing Hokkaido to help resolve the problems facing the nation and to achieve powerful regional growth by taking advantage of the excellent resources and characteristics of Hokkaido.



The 8th term Hokkaido Comprehensive Development Plan covers the period from FY 2016 to roughly FY 2025 and was adopted by Cabinet decision in March 2016. Under the plan, the government is promoting various measures with the goals of creating local communities where people shine, industries that look to the world, and strong, sustainable national land that comprise an image of Hokkaido that is recognized the world over.

In June 2017, the Hokkaido Development Subcommittee reported the results of its discussions by its plan promotion task force. The report describes approval for intensive efforts toward the formation of world-class tourist attractions to lead the actualization of Japan as a world-class tourist destination, and the sustainable development of food product supply bases; the establishment of numerical targets to serve as guidelines for ideals and action; the promotion of policies to extract and share issues for striving for the realization of objectives; and the hosting and follow-up of plan promotion task force meetings roughly once per year to manage the progress of the plan. The MLIT will continue to promote the development of Hokkaido with respect to the Hokkaido Comprehensive Development Plan.

Figure II-4-5-1 Overview of Hokkaido Comprehensive Development Plan



Source) MLIT

## (2) Promoting Measures that Support Plan Realization

The new plan was formulated to respond to various impending issues facing Japan, namely the coming of an era of full-scale population decline, further development and changes to the international environment due to globalism, and major disasters. We are promoting the following types of measures.

### (i) Local communities where people can shine

In addition to establishing regional social structures that enable people to continue to live a long time across Hokkaido, covering vast production spaces that form communities dispersed in wide areas on a scale different from other regions, to city areas, it is also important to promote lively convection by attracting a variety of people to Hokkaido, where the population is declining faster than in other regions in Japan. Thus, the MLIT is promoting the creation of systems to maintain and form a Hokkaido-style regional structures in addition to the formation of wide-area transport networks including national high-grade trunk highways, improving the functions of Michi-no-ekis and Minato Oases, establishing prosperous living environments that accommodate child raising, aging and other concerns, and securing stable transport to and from remote islands as a system for maintaining and improving settlement and exchange environments. We are also promoting efforts such as the development of the Hokkaido Value Creation Partnership Activity, a wide-area, interdisciplinary support and cooperation system for human resources engaged in regional development.

### (ii) Industries that look to the world

Hokkaido has competitive advantages in the agriculture, forestry, and fishery industries; the food and tourism related industries; and other industries for export to other regions in the country and other countries; and it is important to strategically develop these industries. Therefore, we are promoting, among other measures, the enhancement of productivity and competitiveness in the agriculture, forestry and fishery industries by larger division of farmland, advanced sanitation management measures at fishing ports and other means; the creation of a comprehensive base for food by attracting food companies from outside Hokkaido; the promotion of foreign tourists driving around Hokkaido by car and the Scenic Byway Hokkaido program, which encourages the development of scenery, communities and tourist attractions; holding of international conferences (MICE) in Hokkaido; and the strengthening of functions of New Chitose Airport and strategic international bulk ports including Kushiro Port.

### (iii) Strong and sustainable national land

Hokkaido, which has beautiful and magnificent natural environments and abundant renewable energy sources, is expected to take a leading role in forming a sustainable regional society. Ensuring safety and security is the foundation of economic social activities, and it is important for the region to minimize damages in the event of a disaster and contribute to strengthening Japan as a whole. Therefore, we are promoting, among other measures, preservation and regeneration of lakes and wetlands; public awareness relating to the formation of hydrogen society through Hokkaido's platform for developing hydrogen communities; the Hokkaido Emergency Flood Control Measures Project, which was devised in light of the series of tropical cyclone disasters in August 2016; measures to improve the seismic resistance and prevent the deterioration of social infrastructure; regional support in the event of a disaster by dispatching TEC-FORCE (Technical Emergency Control Force); and efforts to enhance safety and reliability of transportation in winter.

## Column

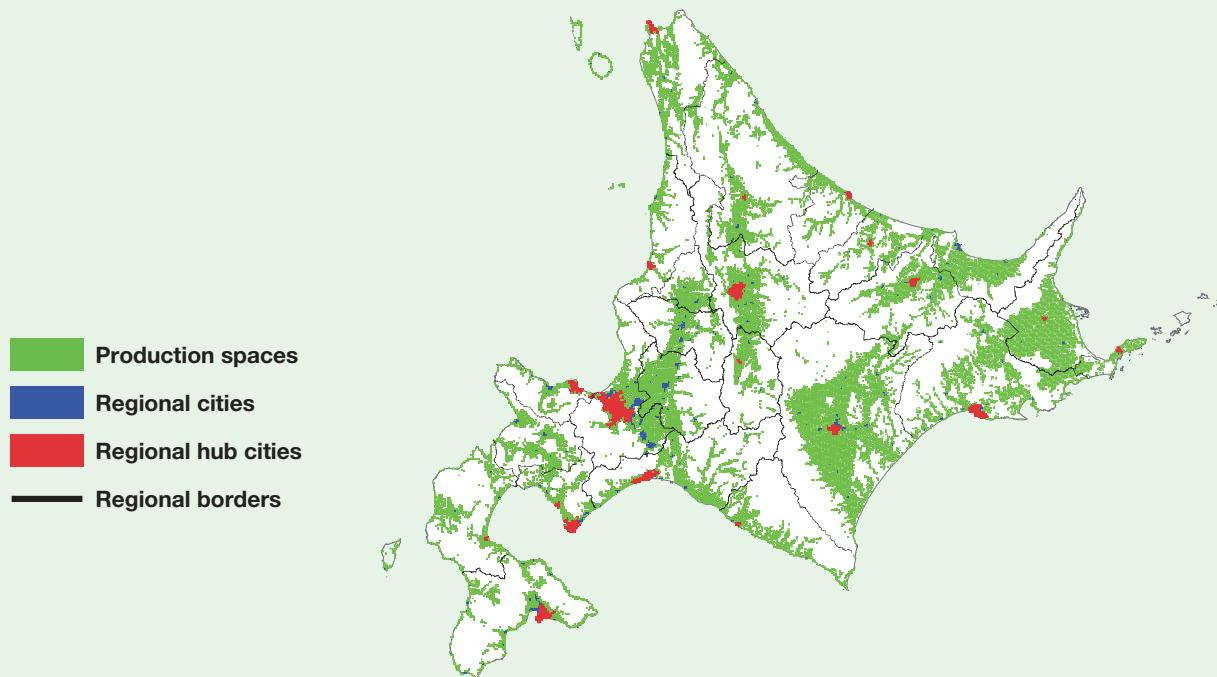
## Protect Hokkaido's Production Spaces!

"Production spaces" are spaces for production in terms of agriculture, forestry, fisheries and tourism, and are a new concept positioned in the Hokkaido Comprehensive Development Plan. In Hokkaido Prefecture, agricultural and fishing industry production takes place mainly in the countryside, and tourism and community resources are also widely distributed throughout the countryside. However, given that Hokkaido alone features widely dispersed communities and has experienced more rapid depopulation and aging than anywhere else in Japan, life may become difficult for people who live in these food and tourism production spaces. Therefore, it is important to form and maintain Hokkaido-style community structures that make it possible for people to continue to live in these production spaces while relying on cities (regional cities) for life services and the closest major cities (regional hub cities) for life security.

In light of these circumstances, three model areas were established for their industrial structure and geographical characteristics: the Nayoro Model Area, the Tokachi-Minami Model Area and the Kushiro Coast Model Area. Diverse entities including national government entities, local government entities and local residents from these model areas gathered to begin investigating efforts to consider and take action in concert with one another. Academics and private corporations active in each of those areas joined national and local government entities in these investigative commissions in which participants introduced issues each region faced and efforts of each entity, and discussed matters such as policies for each region to take going forward.

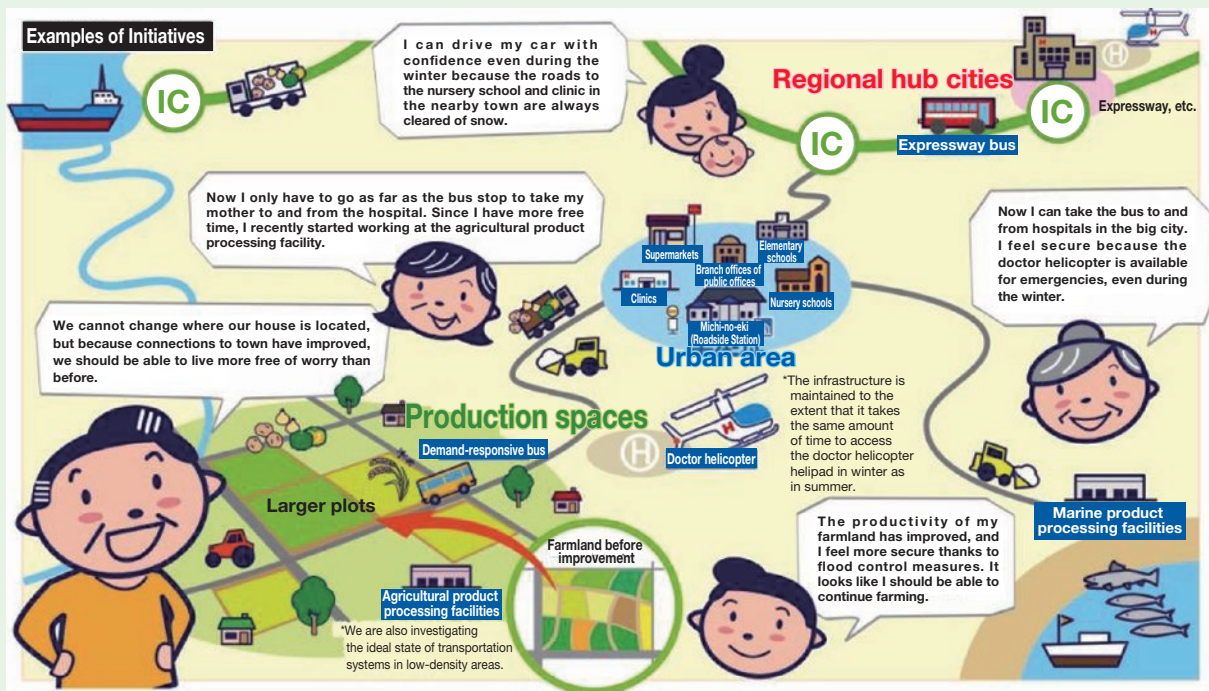
At the first model area investigations held in November 2017 and in January and February 2018, participants discussed social infrastructure in addition to a variety of other issues, including regional medical care, human resources development and smart agriculture. Looking ahead, each model area will organize a policy package involving cooperation and collaboration between diverse entities, and commission members will lead the promotion of those policies. Future plans call for the deployment and dissemination of these efforts throughout Hokkaido Prefecture.

Distribution of Production Spaces, Regional Cities, and Regional Hub Cities in Hokkaido Prefecture



Note 1: Example of regional connections focused mainly on outpatient and inpatient destinations. Regions can change depending on configurations.  
 Note 2: This map does not necessarily or comprehensively depict Japanese territory.  
 Source) Prepared by the MLIT based on the FY 2010 Population Census (Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications)

Examples of Production Space Initiatives (Diagram)



## 2 Promoting Distinctive Regions and Cultures

### (1) Promoting the Regions Neighboring the Northern Territories

Targeting the Northern Territory's neighboring regions where desirable development of regional society is inhibited because of unresolved territorial issues, we are promoting necessary measures in a comprehensive manner under the Seventh Northern Territory Neighboring Regions Revitalization Plan (FY 2013 to FY 2017), which is based on the Act on Special Measures concerning Advancement of Resolution of Northern Territories Issues.

More specifically, the MLIT pursues a mix of structural and non-structural measures to build appealing regional communities in these neighboring regions, including the promotion of agricultural and fishery industries, implementation of public-works projects for development of transportation systems, supporting the implementation of non-structural measures by providing subsidies for project implementation expenditures, such as for Northern Territory neighboring region revitalization.

### (2) Promoting the Ainu Culture, etc.

Based on the Basic Policy on the Development, Management, and Administration of Spaces Symbolic of Ethnic Harmony for Promoting the Restoration of Ainu Culture (adopted by a Cabinet decision on June 13, 2014, partially amended on June 27, 2017) and the like, spaces symbolic of ethnic harmony will open to the public on April 24, 2020—in advance of the Tokyo 2020 Olympic and Paralympic Games—and the National Park for Ethnic Harmony and a memorial facility will be established, and development preparation will be promoted in pursuit of realizing the target of 1 million visitors.

Figure II-4-5-2

Image of the Core Zones of the Space Symbolic of Ethnic Harmony



Source) MLIT



In addition, we are working on public awareness activities such as the hosting of music festivals, implementation of onboard guidance in the Ainu language on buses, and other efforts as part of the “i ran karap te” (an Ainu greeting meaning “how are you”) campaign developed through industry-academia-government collaboration in accordance with the Act on the Promotion of Ainu Culture, and Dissemination and Enlightenment of Knowledge about Ainu Tradition.

